

To the March Urban District Council

Feby 20th 1899

A N N U A L R E P O R T

Gentlemen,

Herewith I beg to furnish you with my annual report of the births deaths and sickness for the past year ending the 31st day of December 1898.

Births

The births registered numbered 199 Males 113, Females 86, giving a birth rate of 27.1 per thousand against 28.2 the previous year.

Deaths

The deaths registered numbered 98. Males 58, Females 40, or a death rate of 13.1 per thousand against 14.6 the previous year.

Ages at
Death

Ages at Death :- 29 occurred to Infants under one year 11 one year and under 5, 2 five and under fifteen, 4 fifteen and under twenty five, 21 twenty five and under sixty five, 31 sixty five and upwards, of these 9 lived to seventy years and upwards, 13 to eighty and upwards, 4 to ninety and upwards, 2 reaching the age of 93 years. As in former years the greatest number of deaths occurred to Infants and aged people which together number sixty of the ninety eight deaths, whereas 6 only occurred between the ages of five and twenty five years.

Causes
of Death

Causes of Deaths :- 19 occurred to Infants from diseases incidental to infantile life ; 9 to senile decay ; 9 to Gastro Enteritis ; 9 to (Bronchitis, Pneumonia or Pleurisy) ; 8 to Heart Disease ; 6 to Consumption ; 6 to Cancer ; 5 to Diseases of the Kidneys ; 4 to Diarrhoea ; 4 to Drowning or Suicide ; 3 to Tuberculosis ; 2 to Whooping Cough, 2 to Influenza ; 1 to Measles, the remainder to various causes

Distribution of Deaths :- In order to comprehend the distribution of deaths and sickness from Zymotic diseases I shall as heretofore divide the district into three parts ; 1st the Southern, that is, that part of the district south of the River Nene, in this 30 deaths occurred ; 2nd Middle District, that is, that portion of the district North of the River and South of the Great Eastern Railway, in this 59 deaths occurred ; 3rd North District, that is, that part North of the Great Eastern Railway including Norwoodside, in this 9 deaths occurred.

Under the Diseases Notification Act 46 cases were reported, 25 of Erysipelas, 17 of Scarlet Fever, 3 of Enteric fever, and 1 of Diphtheria ; of these, 5 cases of Erysipelas and 5 of Scarlet Fever occurred in the Southern District ; 17 cases of Erysipelas, 9 of Scarlet Fever, 3 of Enteric fever and 1 of Diphtheria occurred in the Middle District ; 3 cases of Erysipelas and 3 of Scarlet Fever occurred in the North District.

Sickness - During the past year the district was entirely free from any epidemic, and there was comparatively speaking but little sickness, Diseases of the respiratory organs were very much less than in any previous year, Bronchitis, Pneumonia or Pleurisy which in former years claimed 29 victims, declined to 9 cases ; Gastro Enteritis and Diarrhoea caused the deaths of 13 children probably due to putrefactive changes in Milk during the hot weather ; cases of Cancer, Heart Disease and Consumption were about the same as previous years. Of the Zymotic diseases which proved fatal, 4 occurred from Diarrhoea, 2 from Whooping Cough 2 from Influenza and 1 from Measles. Scarlet Fever was more or less in evidence during the year, but all the cases were in a very mild form and there was no death. Cases of Erysipelas formed 25 of the total of the 46 cases of Zymotic diseases notified all with one or two exceptions seemed to be produced from cold and exposure, but in no case was there a

fatal issue. Three cases of Typhoid Fever occurred in that part of the district, to which I had frequently called attention as being in a very insanitary condition, overcrowded and without proper closet accommodation. I am glad to note since my interference the cottages have been well ventilated, back windows have been put in, and new closets erected.

Taking the year altogether, I think I may congratulate the Board on the satisfactory state of Health in the district, and the death rate of 13.1 per thousand of the population, will compare favorably with any other town in the County.

I have for some years past called attention to the absolute necessity of a pure water supply, and am glad to note that, year by year, additional service is laid on and that, at the present time, nearly every part of the town within measureable distance of the Marham Main the water is used, still there are some who continue to use well water; they do so at great risk as all the well water I have examined is more or less polluted and unfit for domestic use. Others use water obtained from the roofs of houses and outhouses but have bad storage accommodation; in parts of the district where the Board cannot enforce the taking in of the Marham Water, a Public Tap might serve a useful purpose, and prevent disease. From time to time I have advised the wearing of good flannel clothing next the skin; as most of the work in this district is of an outdoor nature, and the climatic changes rapid, and here I may remark that during the past year there has been fewer colds and less sickness from diseases of the respiratory organs than in any previous years.

I must now call attention to what at the present time is engaging the minds of the most scientific men as to the best means to prevent and, if possible, stamp out "Tuberculosis" you are probably aware that this disease in one form or another contributes annually a very large proportion of the deaths in this country. At a recent Meeting held in London consequent on a Royal Commission Sir W. Broadbent

backed up with other eminent medical men declared that Tuberculosis (or consumption) was a preventible disease and was not as heretofore believed "Hereditary" but was introduced into the body from without and that the greatest factor for its production consisted in our Milk supply. Now milk is supplied by nature from mother to child and it rarely if ever happens that Tuberculosis is found in the human milk gland, but the time comes when children have to be fed with cows milk and if we could ensure that every milch cow was free from Tuberculosis and that no milk was obtained from any cow with diseased udder, the milk so used could produce no disease but unfortunately cows are very prone to Tubercular disease, consequently if the milk from such animals is used without certain precautions we introduce germs into the body and lay the foundation for future disease ; now, what is the remedy ; the "Tubercle Bacillus" which causes all the mischief can be destroyed by boiling the milk even for one minute but as some object to the taste of boiled milk it should be sterilized and no milk should be used without The simplest way of doing this is to put the milk as soon as it arrives in a covered vessel, this is put into another vessel containing water and the water be allowed to boil gently from ten to fifteen minutes the milk will then be thoroughly sterilized, will have no unpleasant taste and be quite free from imparting any disease, it is a very simple process and if carried out, which I hope it may be, will do much to forward and assist the efforts of those who wish to eradicate Tuberculosis from the list of preventible diseases, but there are other factors besides milk which must be seriously taken into account such as unwholesome surroundings, overcrowding, that all persons engaged in milking should be healthy and not suffering from any Tuberculous disease that the cowsheds should be kept clean, warm, and well ventilated ; Sir Richard Thorne Thorne in the course of one of his admirable lectures on this subject says "That according to his experience by far the

"worst constructed, worst ventilated and the dirtiest cow-sheds are to be found in villages, hamlets and rural areas and that the neglect in rural cowsheds the City byres take precedence of the country ones in the matter of Tuberculosis and of 228 samples of milk taken from cowsheds in the City of Liverpool, 12 or 5.2 per cent exhibited the Tubercle Bacillus whereas of 67 samples derived from country cowsheds 9 or 13.4 per cent were found so infected and at Manchester out of 93 samples of milk taken at Railway Stations on their arrival from the country 18 per cent contained the Tubercle Bacillus." It must not therefore be taken for granted that because we live in the country that our milk supply is necessarily pure and free from contamination, very great cleanliness and vigilance is required and on no account should milk be used or mixed with other milk if there is any disease in the udder of the cow.

With regard to persons suffering from Phthisis (commonly called consumption) it should be widely known that this is a highly communicable disease and that every person so afflicted should live as much as possible out of doors, should if practicable have a separate sleeping apartment and sleep with open window, that all sputa should be carefully collected in a proper receptacle, disinfected and destroyed. On no account should the sputa be allowed to dry and become dust as it might be inhaled by others revivify and produce the disease. I have every reason to hope if the foregoing remarks are carefully read and acted upon that much human suffering may be avoided. The points I wish all to remember may be summarized as follows :-

1st That as milk plays such an important part in the production of Tuberculous diseases (consumption &c.) it should not be used raw.

2nd That milk before being used should be either boiled or sterilized.

3rd No milk should be allowed to be taken from a cow with disease of the udder.

4th Consumptive persons should have nothing to do with milking or handling of milk in any way.

5th Consumptives should live out of doors as much as possible and have separate sleeping apartments and sleep with open window.

6th Sputa from consumptive persons should be disinfected and destroyed.

7th Sputa should never be allowed to become dry and converted into dust as in this way it is the greatest source of danger to others.

8th In all cases of deaths from consumption the room occupied and all clothes should be thoroughly disinfected but the bed or mattress would be better burnt.

The daily use of the scavenging cart has been productive of good results but as many of the houses are now fitted up with dry earth closets and have no place to put the refuse, I would suggest and advise that the cart collect and remove the contents once a week.

The following are some of the steps taken by me during the past year for the removal of nuisances and the prevention and spread of disease.

January

Received notification of case of Erysipelas and gave instructions to prevent any spread of disease.

Received information that a stable occupied by Mr Bridgstock was causing a nuisance to adjoining premises, visited and inspected same with agent and arranged for any nuisance to be abated.

February

Received notification of two cases of Erysipelas, gave instructions to prevent any spread of disease.

Received information of nuisance caused by keeping of pigs advised Nuisance Inspector to see to the matter.

Received notice of a case of overcrowding in Little London advised the party to leave and get a larger house, this was carried out.

Received notification that a ditch in Creek received the refuse from a house occupied by Mr Lewis, the effluent pipe was stopped up and the ditch was in a foul state, ordered ditch to be cleaned out and pipe opened, this was carried out.

March

Received notice of 3 cases of Erysipelas and gave instructions.

April

Received notice of a case of Enteric Fever, visited and inspected premises, ordered your Inspector of Nuisances to disinfect and have all refuse removed.

Received information of a case of overcrowding in house occupied by a man, his wife and 5 children with only one bedroom next door to case of Enteric Fever, ordered that the nuisance be abated, this was carried out.. My attention was also called to this row of cottages which had neither back doors or back windows, advised your Board to order steps to be at once taken to put in back windows and erect proper closets, this was carried out.

May-

Received notification of 2 cases of Erysipelas and one of Enteric Fever, advised proper precautions to be taken to prevent the spread of those diseases and the case of Enteric Fever to be removed to Infectious Hospital, this was carried out.

Received information that 16 Cottages belonging to Mr Martin Rowe had earth closets but not sufficient garden ground to put refuse, advised your Board to consider what best to do ; also that the connections with the soak wells had not been fixed, ordered this to be attended to and it was carried out. My attention was also called to certain drains on the Station Road on premises occupied by Mr Harker and another, advised



the catch pits to be emptied, but as the pipes were also choked, advised your Board that notice should be served on Landlord or his agent to do the necessary structural alterations, this was carried out.

My attention was also called to the condition of privies in Creek Road Nos 5, 6, 7, 8 which were placed too near the living rooms, advised that the privies be done away with and that earth closets be put up, this was carried out.

Received notification of another case of Enteric Fever in the same family, advised your Board to at once insist upon cottages being put into good sanitary condition and proper closets erected, this was carried out.

June

Received notification of 8 cases of Scarlet Fever, 4 of Erysipelas and 1 of Enteric Fever, visited and inspected premises, had case of Enteric Fever removed to Infectious Hospital and all premises disinfected.

Received notice of foul state of privy in West End, ordered your Inspector to give notice to have it emptied, this was carried out.

July

Received notification of 4 cases of Scarlet Fever, visited and inspected premises and gave directions.

Received notice that pigs kept in New Park were a nuisance and in a filthy state, ordered your Inspector to visit and have them cleaned out, this was done.

Received information that a privy in High Street was in a foul state, advised it to be done away with and a proper water closet put up, this was carried out.

Received information that a house in Binnimoor and two cottages at Daintree were without means for the proper storage of water, advised your Board to order Landlords to do what was necessary, this was done but as far as I am aware it has not been carried out.

Advised your Board to procure for the purpose of disinfection one Alformant Lamp, this was purchased and been used with good results.

August

Received notification of 8 cases of Erysipelas, 4 of Scarlet Fever, and 1 of Diphtheria, visited and inspected premises and gave instructions to prevent any further spread of these diseases.

Received information and complaint that a number of pigs were kept on premises in the Causeway, visited same with Inspector, found 25 pigs in a foul and dirty state, ordered nuisance to be abated, this was attended to.

September

Received notification of one case of Erysipelas and gave instructions.

October

Received notification of 2 cases of Erysipelas and gave instructions.

November

Received notification of 1 case of Erysipelas and gave instructions.

Called the attention of your Board that the order for the proper storage of water to houses in Binnimoor and Daintree had not been carried out.

December

Received notification of 1 case of Erysipelas and one of Scarlet Fever, had precautions taken to prevent any further spread of these diseases.

Subjoined is tabulated statement of Deaths and Infectious sickness.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

Alfred I. G. Waters

Medical Officer of Health

March Urban District

